

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

“Called by and returned to the Overseer  
of Your soul – Jesus, the Good Shepherd”

1 Peter 2:21-25

April 26, 2026

Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter is from our epistle reading, 1 Peter 2:21-25.

**“21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:**

**22 “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;**

**23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

So far our text:

This last verse of our text describes all believers in Christ, doesn't it. It gets real personal when we hear the word “you” and “your”. You were like sheep. God is speaking directly to you and me. In what way were you like sheep?

Were you fuzzy and cuddly and huggable little creatures? That's not what the Bible says, does it? We were like sheep in the sense that we were going astray. A sheep needs constant overwatch...constant care and protection. Without a true shepherd the sheep are defenseless. They are easy pickings for predators like a wolf who scatters them and destroys them. So we hear Jesus speak of this grave danger in verses following our Gospel reading in John 10.

**“12 But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.”**

Scattered...gone astray. What does that mean in a spiritual sense? It means that we were conceived in sin, original sin, born into the kingdom of sin, the reign of the devil, the wolf...deceived and lost.

But Apostle Peter speaks of this grave predicament in the past, doesn't he? **“For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”**

What changed? The sheep all of a sudden got smart and found their way back to the fold? No, the word “returned” is a verb in the passive tense. You were returned. Someone returned you. You did nothing nor were capable of doing anything to be returned. And that Someone is the Shepherd, the Good Shepherd, the Overseer of your souls.

You see there are two verbs in our epistle reading that need to be highlighted for their passive tense in the Greek. “Called” and “Returned”.

The Good Shepherd did the active calling and returning of your soul to His Kingdom of grace. He rescued you from your lost state of slavery of sin. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, called you with His beautiful Gospel voice that your warfare has ended. He has conquered the wolf and oversees your soul eternally. What Good News!

But how did Jesus rescue you? Listen to John 10:11. **“11 “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.”**

Why is Jesus the Good Shepherd? Because He didn't flee like a hireling when danger came. But He willingly laid down His life for the sheep. That was the cost to return you and me. Jesus' death on the cross.

**“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;**  
**23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”**

You were healed...spiritually healed...your sins were forgiven...Jesus' stripes have cured you of the leprosy of sin! This was the only way to remove our debt of sin. The Shepherd

who committed no sin, innocent, without deceit had to bear our sins for us in our place. And He did! And that is why Jesus alone is the Good Shepherd.

What did Jesus have to do? He had to completely trust in Him who judges righteously. Jesus had to completely trust His Father's will and endure the unjust punishment that He received. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return. When He suffered, He did not threaten.

That was how our salvation was won. And because the Good Shepherd trusted and obeyed His Father completely, He had the power to rise victoriously three days later on Easter! So Jesus continues in John 10:

**17 “Therefore My Father loves Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. 18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father.”**

To this you, fellow sheep have been called... to live under the victorious power of the living Good Shepherd. He has subdued all enemies under His feet. He has trounced the wolf, the evil one and now shepherds your soul. Yes, He personally shepherds “your” soul. How? With His rod and staff – Word and Sacraments. He feeds you with His precious pastures of His word and gives you His very body and blood for your forgiveness. Oh, they comfort me! Says the David in Psalm 23. So says your soul!

The Good Shepherd has restored your soul. He is the Overseer, the Bishop, the eternal Caretaker of your soul. So David can exclaim these words: **“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”**

Do you trust the Good Shepherd? Do you trust His eternal care for your soul? Then Peter tells you and me something very important about being Jesus' sheep: Follow His example.

**“21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:”**

You see, you have been called into His Kingdom, His most amazing Kingdom of grace, of righteousness, of life, abundant life! And yet this Kingdom in which we live is still in the midst of this world of sin. You are in the world but not of the world.

So we see the ugliness of sin daily about us. For the devil still roams like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We saw last night on television men and women in tuxedos and evening gowns, crawling on the floor to escape an armed attacker. Thanks be to God that though this attacker fired his weapon, no one was injured. God, the Good Shepherd protected our president and leaders from physical harm according to His good will.

Yes, evil abounds in this world in which we live. Surely we will endure injustices just as our Good Shepherd did. So Peter tells us:

**“But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.”**

There is much that God’s sheep suffer at the hand of the devil, the sinful world and our own sinful flesh...physical, emotional, spiritual suffering. And yet, the sheep, like our Good Shepherd commit ourselves to God who judges righteously. Vengeance is mine says the Lord.

And so like the first believers after Jesus resurrection, we too **“continue steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”**

Trusting our Good Shepherd, we follow Him by being fed with His Word and Sacrament of the Altar – the breaking of bread. And follow His example by sometimes suffering for doing good.

For we know that the Overseer of our souls, our Good Shepherd always works good for His sheep. And so we live our lives with gladness and simplicity of heart...praising God!

Amen!

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**